

# FOUR TYPICAL NORTH CAROLINA CHARACTERS.

"Corn Cracker" Writes of Four of His Neighbors Who Have Recently Passed Away.

Editor of The Progressive Farmer:

Since writing my last article, we have had a two weeks' period of dry winds, which was injuring cotton, late corn, and sweet potatoes. The drought was broken yesterday by a good, gentle rain, and conditions are improved. As a compensation for this dry spell of over two weeks, it has been a fine time for saving fodder. Present indications are for about two-thirds of a corn yield, and nearly three-fourths of a cotton crop in this immediate section. I am, however, advised, that the average for the fleecy staple in Cleveland County will not be over two-thirds of a yield.

The fruit crop of this immediate section is very short, and peas are very small for the season.

Referring again to cotton prospects, the crop is at least three weeks late, and much depends on the frost.

Allow me to here incidentally remark that I speak as one having authority, being something of a farmer myself. Yes, I teach school, take pictures, play the fiddle, am a wood-butcher, farmer, ink-slinger, am conversant with saw mills; and do pretty well at everything I ever tried except making a living. Have been likewise a singing-school teacher, have drilled military companies, drove hogs, sold Bibles, peddled clocks, broke mules and "saved" (?) the State.

Speaking of men who have succeeded in life, as the world accepts success, and the shiftless "Jack of all trades," I am reminded of four men who have died in this county in the last few years. One of them was Col. E. . . . , who was painfully awkward in every way, both as to appearance and execution. He was a tanner and farmer, and made both enterprises pay. Yet he seemed to be in his own way in the use of farming or tanning tools, and could hardly write a legible hand, he was so awkward. He was active and influential in church work, yet he could not sing or talk in public. He lived something over seventy years, and died well off in this world's goods, although awkward, cramped, and a semi-invalid half his life.

The other was a near neighbor, who farmed and prospered. His hands were all thumbs, and he could not have made an ax-handle, hoe-handle, or nailed two boards together if the fate of the nation was in the balance.

It was said that when a Confederate soldier, he never could go through the manual of arms or "keep step." He could hardly "fix bayonets" at all, and could not cover up with an army blanket. In farming he could not lay off a straight row, nor lay off a ditch or terrace. He always plowed up and down hill, and plowed in every rain that didn't fall at night or on Sunday, and lived over 80 years. He had ground off four fingers in a cane mill, but managed to plow with plows that

most of farmers would throw into the scrap pile, chop with axes dull as an ordinary mattocks, shave with a dull razor, but left several thousand dollars worth of property and no incumbrances for his heirs.

Last Saturday I saw all that was mortal of 'Squire E. Z. Champion, late of Camp Call, this county.

He attained the age of about 55, and was a "Jack of all trades." When he was mustered out of the Civil War he could barely read and write his name. He married young, and raised a large family on rented land.

By reading he became very well informed, and could out-speak and out-sing any other man in his township. He was a good carpenter, could run a saw mill, a fair farmer, an excellent Sunday-school and church organizer and worker, and no farmer in this region could hold a light for him on a political speech. He was raised where the moral, educational, and religious standard was very low, and his environment was very unpromising. Nearly all his neighbors made whiskey, and chicken fights and shooting-matches were the Sunday diversions. Later, Champion joined the Baptist Church, and as much or more through his agency than of any other one man, Union Church was built twenty years ago. It is a creditable, commodious building, painted white, well seated, and well ventilated. 'Squire Champion had little money to give, but he hauled sawlogs, worked at his trade, and, by his powers of persuasion, induced others to contribute the sinews of war. A good Sunday-school has been carried on all the time, of which Champion has been music leader and Superintendent. While a Baptist, he has, part of the time, been also Superintendent of a Methodist Sunday-school near him that met in the evening. About the time the church was built, a school house was erected. This was a framed structure 20 x 30 feet, and, at that time, one of the best public school buildings in Cleveland County. Needless to say, that the same self-sacrifice and enthusiasm of E. Z. Champion helped to promote and perfect this enterprise. The writer taught three terms in this building, and found 'Squire Champion a good patron, and an excellent committeeman. Later, they found they needed a better house, and one is about completed, costing over \$500.

The same energy was again shown, and here he sacrificed his life.

On Thursday of last week, another very useful man passed away at Latimore, N. C. This was John H. Beam, also a Confederate soldier,

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Bed-ridden, alone and destitute. Such, in brief, was the condition of an old soldier by name of J. J. Havens, Versailles, O. For years he was troubled with Kidney disease and neither doctors nor medicines gave him relief. At length he tried Electric Bitters. It put him on his feet in short order, and now he testifies: "I'm on the road to complete recovery." Best on earth for Liver and Kidney troubles and all forms of Stomach and Bowel complaints. 50c. Guaranteed by all druggists.

aged 58. He was a fine farmer; owned grist mills, cotton gins, oil mills, and some of the finest lands in Cleveland and Rutherford Counties. His money backed every religious and educational enterprise, yet he was a man who could not speak or sing. He was, unlike the rugged 'Squire Champion, a semi-invalid. Yet he made money, did good with it, and will be generally lamented.

Four characters have now been imperfectly portrayed,—two remarkably awkward, yet useful; one a born machinist, the other a "Jack of all trades" pure and simple. He never was worth much financially, but was one of God's heroes as far as elevating and ennobling mankind was concerned. Maybe there is a place for the all-round useful man at last, albeit he does little for himself.

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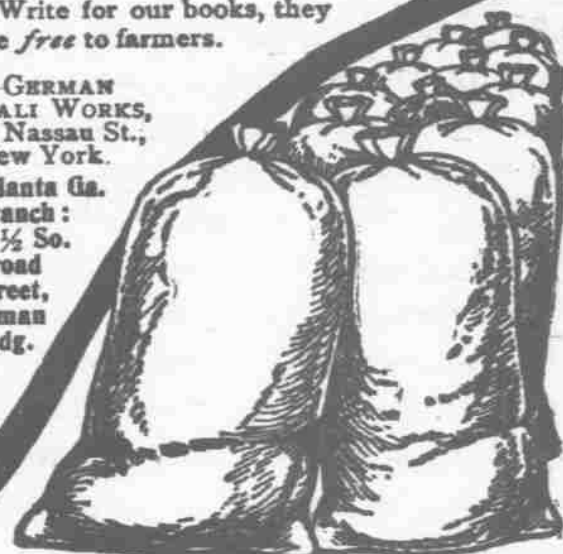
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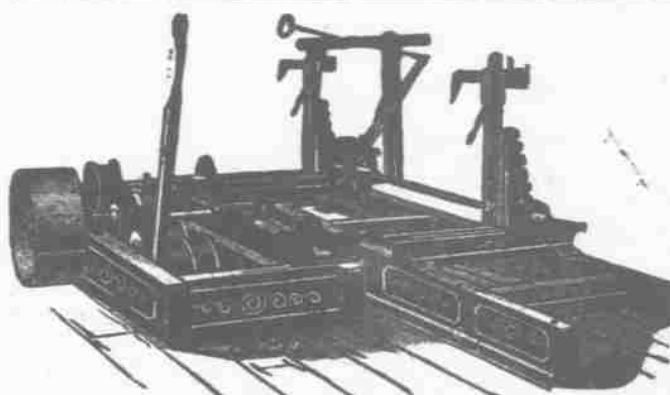
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